

Constitution of the Graduate Student Association of the University of Miami

Preamble

We, the graduate students of the University of Miami, in order to provide means for responsible and effective graduate student participation in the planning and conducting of University affairs, establish this constitution of the Graduate Student Association of the University of Miami;

And, whereas, we the graduate students acknowledge the diversity of human experience;

And, whereas, we the graduate students exist to further knowledge within our disciplines by eliminating biases and prejudices;

Be it resolved, that the Graduate Student Association shall adopt as continuing policy that no individual shall be discriminated against on the basis of race, religion, age, disability, national and/or ethnic origin, marital status, gender, or sexual orientation.

**Ratified by the Graduate Student Executive Board and Senate on October 7, 2008.
Amended on March 23, 2008.**

Article I: Name

The name of the organization shall be the Graduate Student Association (GSA) of the University of Miami.

Article II: Statement of Purpose

The Graduate Student Association shall exist as the student government organization representing all students in the University of Miami Graduate School. The Graduate Student Association shall serve as the liaison between graduate students, individually and collectively, the faculty, the administration, and the alumni of the University of Miami. Further, the Graduate Student Association shall exist as a forum to support and improve the quality of the environment for graduate students at the University of Miami.

The general functions of the Graduate Student Association shall be:

- (a.) To protect and advocate for the civil rights, social welfare, and economic well-being of graduate students by making recommendations regarding University of Miami policies;
- (b.) To sponsor and lend its name to events conducted for the benefit of all graduate students;
- (c.) To expend its funds appropriately for the fulfillment of all graduate student needs; and
- (d.) To facilitate graduate students' access to information regarding the resources and services available to graduate students.

Article III: Membership

Graduate Student Association membership is granted to any degree-seeking student registered for graduate credit in a department or program within the University of Miami Graduate School.

Article IV: Officers and Executive Board

Section 1: The Graduate Student Association shall have seven (7) elected officers. The elected Officers of the Graduate Student Association shall be the President, the Vice President, the Secretary, the Treasurer, the Parliamentarian, the Media Relations Officer, and the Webmaster.

Section 2: The term of office for all elected Officers shall be for the period of one (1) calendar year, commencing May 15.

Section 3: The Executive Board shall consist of the elected Officers of the Graduate Student Association.

Section 4: No more than two (2) graduate students who are seeking degrees from the same department at the University of Miami may be elected Officers and sit on the Executive Board.

Section 5: The following procedures shall govern all eligibility of Officers. All procedures for the nomination and election of Officers are outlined in the Bylaws.

- (a.) The position of President will be limited to Graduate Student Association members continuing their degree during the following year at the University of Miami. Offices other than the office of the President will be open to:
 - i. Any member of the Graduate Student Association that will be continuing their education the following year at the University of Miami.
 - ii. Any member of the University of Miami that provides a letter of acceptance to seek a graduate degree at the University of Miami, a letter of intent to seek a graduate degree at the University of Miami and proof of having filed for May graduation.
 - iii. Any alumni of the University of Miami that was granted a degree within the last year and provides a letter of acceptance to seek a graduate degree at the University of Miami, a letter of intent to seek a graduate degree at the University of Miami and proof of being conferred a degree from the University of Miami
- (b.) The President shall be elected at a regular meeting no later than the last regular meeting in March of the Graduate Student Senate, as defined in Article V, Section 11 of the Constitution. The remaining six (6) Officers of the shall be elected at a regular meeting no later than the last regular meeting in April of the Graduate Student Senate. Also, the election of the President is to take place at a meeting prior to the meeting where the remaining six (6) officers are elected.
- (c.) All members of the Senate and the Executive board shall be entitled to vote in the Graduate Student Association Officer elections.

Section 6: Duties of the Officers

- (a.) The duties of the President shall be:
 - i. To enforce the Graduate Student Association Constitution and Bylaws;
 - ii. To serve as the Executive Board chairperson;
 - iii. To preside over Senate meetings;

- iv. To represent the Graduate Student Association on matters of business with the Graduate School Dean and other University officials;
 - v. To represent the Graduate Student Association at all official and social occasions or to appoint a representative, as appropriate;
 - vi. To recruit and appoint chairpersons as members of the Graduate Student Association Committees and serve as an ex-officio member on all Committees;
 - vii. To recruit and appoint graduate students to serve as Graduate Student Association Representatives on the following University committees:
 - 1. Board of Trustees Academic Affairs Committee;
 - 2. Board of Trustees Master Planning and Construction Committee;
 - 3. Board of Trustees Student Affairs Committee;
 - 4. Department of Wellness and Recreation Advisory Board;
 - 5. Faculty Senate;
 - 6. Faculty Senate Library and Information Resources Committee;
 - 7. Faculty Senate Student Affairs Committee;
 - 8. Graduate Council;
 - 9. Graduate Council Grievances Committee;
 - 10. Green U;
 - 11. Information Technology Advisory Board;
 - 12. Library Advisory Board;
 - 13. Parking Advisory Board;
 - 14. Police Advisory Board;
 - 15. Rathskeller Advisory Board; and
 - 16. Student Government Senate;
 - viii. To conduct training and orientation for the Graduate Student Association President-elect;
 - ix. To prepare the Graduate Student Association annual report at the end of the officer's term;
 - x. To serve as the liaison to the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students; and
 - xi. To perform such duties as the office shall require.
- (b.) The duties of the Vice President shall be:
- i. To assume the President's duties in the officer's absence;
 - ii. To assist the President in the performance of the officer's duties;
 - iii. To coordinate the departmental or program elections or appointments of the Graduate Student Association Senators;
 - iv. To conduct departmental or program elections in the event that a department or program fails to elect or appoint a Senator;
 - v. To initiate actions for the recall of a Senator, Committee Chairperson, Committee member, or Representative when necessary;
 - vi. To assist with graduate student orientation programs;
 - vii. To serve as the Events and Lectures Committee chairperson;
 - viii. To perform the duties of the Parliamentarian in the event that the office is vacant; and
 - ix. To perform such duties as the office shall require.
- (c.) The duties of the Secretary shall be:

- i. To record the official minutes of all Graduate Student Association meetings, including Senate and Executive Board meetings;
 - ii. To maintain the official Senate roster and take attendance at all Senate meetings;
 - iii. To supervise the Graduate Student Association office staff in maintaining directories of graduate students, deans, graduate advisors, graduate faculty, administrative personnel, and support staff;
 - iv. To supervise the office staff in maintaining a file of all official Graduate Student Association correspondence;
 - v. To notify Senators and graduate advisors of all Senate meetings and other Graduate Student Association activities; and
 - vi. To perform such duties as the office shall require.
- (d.) The duties of the Treasurer shall be:
- i. To manage the Graduate Student Association finances;
 - ii. To present a current fiscal report at each Senate and Executive Board meeting;
 - iii. To maintain current financial records in the Graduate Student Association office;
 - iv. To coordinate and record all financial transactions with the Graduate School, including approval of all requisitions, disbursements, and maintenance of account ledgers;
 - v. To serve or appoint a representative to serve on the Graduate Activity Fee Allocation Committee;
 - vi. To coordinate the processing of paperwork for office staff hiring and payment; and
 - vii. To perform such duties as the office shall require.
- (e.) The duties of the Parliamentarian shall be:
- i. To advise the President of the constitutionality of all actions by the Graduate Student Association;
 - ii. To preside over Senate meetings in the President's and Vice President's absence;
 - iii. To ensure that Senate and Executive Board meetings are conducted according to *Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised*;
 - iv. To keep the Graduate Student Association Bylaws current;
 - v. To conduct the annual review of the Graduate Student Association Constitution and Bylaws and serve as the Constitution Review Committee chairperson;
 - vi. To draft and distribute, as appropriate, all resolutions approved by the Senate; and
 - vii. To perform such duties as the office shall require.
- (f.) The duties of the Media Relations Officer shall be:
- i. To publicize Graduate Student Association events, proceedings, achievements, and members to the University of Miami and the local and national media;
 - ii. To assume the responsibility for the production and e-mailing of the Graduate Student Association newsletter;
 - iii. To attend all official and social Graduate Student Association events, or delegate an alternate, and record the year's activities on film and through a collection of published material;
 - iv. To organize such a record into the Graduate Student Association annual book;
 - v. To serve as the Graduate Student Alumni Association liaison; and
 - vi. To perform such duties as the office shall require.
- (g.) The duties of the Webmaster shall be:

- i. To oversee and maintain the Graduate Student Association website and e-mail account, in cooperation with the Information Technology Department;
 - ii. To provide office technical support and maintenance; and
 - iii. To perform such duties as the office shall require;
- (h.) All Officers shall attend every Senate meeting. Two (2) unexcused absences are grounds for impeachment.
- (i.) The Graduate Student Association Officers shall have the right to vote on all matters brought before the Senate.

Section 7: Impeachment of Officers

- (a.) Graduate Student Association Officers may be impeached for misconduct of malfeasance in office or for not performing duties as outlined in Article IV, Section 6 of the Constitution. Charges must be submitted in writing to the Graduate School Dean by three (3) or more persons who are either members of the Executive Board or the Senate. The Officer being charged shall be notified of the charges within forty-eight (48) hours of them being filed.
- (b.) All charges shall be made public and investigated by the Graduate Student Association Ethics Committee under the direction of the Graduate School Dean.
- i. The Ethics Committee shall be created as needed in response to any Officer being charged. The committee will be formed by lot from the pool of existing GSA Senators. The Graduate School Dean shall have the right to reject any committee members at his or her discretion and any selected Senator may recuse him or herself only if evidence of a conflict of interest is provided.
 - ii. The Ethics Committee will be dissolved at the conclusion of the impeachment proceedings.
- (c.) The recommendations of the Ethics Committee based on the findings of its investigation shall be presented to the Senate. The Officer in question shall have the opportunity to present a response to recommendations at the Senate meeting prior to the vote. A two-thirds vote of the Senate is necessary to remove the officer from office.
- (d.) The officer may appeal his or her impeachment at the next Senate meeting. Any request for such an appeal must be submitted in writing to the Graduate School Dean and the Ethics Committee one (1) week prior to the Senate meeting.
- (e.) A two-thirds vote of the Senate shall be necessary to overturn the impeachment.

Section 8: Duties of the Executive Board

- (a.) The duties of the Executive Board shall be:
- i. To create the Graduate Student Association annual budget;
 - ii. To set the Graduate Student Association calendar of events;
 - iii. To determine the Graduate Student Association's annual objectives and coordinate the Officers' functions in meeting those objectives;
 - iv. To ensure the decisions of the Senate are carried out; and
 - v. To coordinate management of the Graduate Student Association office staff and office functions, including presentation of current resources and event information for graduate students.
- (b.) The Executive Board shall hold at least four (4) meetings per semester to be scheduled by the President. A quorum for Executive Board meetings shall consist of a minimum

of three (3) officers. Special meetings of the Executive Board may be called by the President or by the petition of three (3) officers. The minutes of each Executive Board meeting shall be presented to the Senators at the next Senate meeting.

- (c.) Each member of the Executive Board shall have one (1) vote at the Executive Board meetings. A majority vote of those present is necessary to approve any motion.
- (d.) All budget allocations or expenditures in excess of \$100.00 must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the Executive Board. All budget allocations in excess of \$500.00 must also be approved by the Senate. Proposals for sponsorship of events and allocations of funds in excess of \$500.00 must be submitted in writing with a detailed budget for approval by the Senate prior to the expenditure.
- (e.) The Executive Board has the authority to recall any Senator who fails to attend two (2) consecutive Senate meetings without sending a written proxy or alternate representative to those meetings. Recall procedures are defined in the Bylaws.

Article V: The Senate

Section 1: The legislative authority of the Graduate Student Association shall be vested in the Senate.

Section 2: The Senate shall consist of one Senator from each department or program of the University of Miami Graduate School.

Section 3: Each Senator shall be elected by the graduate students of each respective department or program. In the event an election cannot be held, the Senator shall be appointed by the faculty chairperson of the department or program prior to the first meeting of the fall semester.

Section 4: A maximum of five (5) at-large Senators may be elected to the Senate by a two-thirds approval of the Senate.

Section 5: The term of office for each Senator shall be one (1) academic year.

Section 6: If a Senate position is vacated before the end of the term of office, the department or program shall designate a replacement for that position to complete the term.

Section 7: The duties of each Senator shall be:

- (a.) To represent their constituents' interests in all Graduate Student Association matters;
- (b.) To attend all Senate meetings;
- (c.) To participate in Graduate Student Association Committee activities or act as a Graduate Student Association representative to other University boards, senates, or committees;
- (d.) To inform their constituents of Graduate Student Association activities and events;
- (e.) To discuss, draft, and approve Graduate Student Association resolutions;
- (f.) To review the monthly Treasurer's report and approve by a majority vote budget allocations or expenditures brought by the Executive Board as required by Article IV, Section 6(d) of the Constitution;
- (g.) To review the Graduate Student Association Constitution and Bylaws; and
- (h.) To approve recommendations regarding University of Miami policies.

Section 8: A quorum of ten (10) Senators or their alternates shall be required for any Senate meeting.

Section 9: The Graduate Student Association President shall preside over Senate meetings.

Section 10: Each Senator and Graduate Student Association Officer shall have one (1) vote in all matters brought before the Senate. A Senator that is absent may submit a written proxy for a specific vote or send an alternate to serve as a general proxy.

Section 11: At least four (4) meetings of the Senate shall be scheduled per semester by the Executive Board. The President may call special meetings of the Senate, by petition of three (3) officers or by two-thirds of the Senators.

Section 12: Any Senator who exhibits gross misconduct, malfeasance in office, or fails to attend two (2) consecutive Senate meetings without sending a written proxy or alternate representative may be recalled from office upon written notification by the Executive Board. Senators may appeal a recall action as defined in the Bylaws.

Article VIII: Committees

Section 1: The President shall recruit and appoint graduate students to serve as members and/or chairpersons on the functioning Graduate Student Association Standing Committees. The Executive Board shall approve all appointments by majority vote.

Section 2: Committee chairpersons and members do not have to hold office as a Graduate Student Association Senator or Officer.

Section 3: All graduate students who accept an appointment to a Committee are expected to carry out the following duties:

- (a.) All Committee members must attend all meetings of said committee or send an alternate, represent the interest of all graduate students on said committee to the best of his or her ability, and send reports to their respective Committee Chairperson.
- (b.) All Committee chairpeople must attend all meetings of said committee or send an alternate, represent the interest of all graduate students on said committee to the best of his or her ability, send all committee notes to the Graduate Student Association Secretary within a week following each Committee meeting, and prepare an oral or written Committee report to be presented at the next Senate meeting.

Section 4: Any Committee chairperson or member who exhibits gross misconduct, malfeasance, or failure to attend two (2) consecutive committee meetings without sending a written proxy or alternative representative may either be removed or replaced with another committee appointment upon written notification by the Executive Board. Committee chairpersons or members may appeal a recall action as defined in the Bylaws.

Section 5: The following shall be the Graduate Student Association Standing Committees:

- (a.) General Welfare;

- (b.) Health Insurance;
- (c.) Events and Lectures;
- (d.) Grievances; and
- (e.) Constitution Review.

Section 6: The General Welfare Committee shall address all graduate student issues not addressed by the other Committees.

Section 7: The Health Insurance Committee shall address all issues related to graduate student health insurance.

Section 8: The Events and Lectures Committee, under the direction of the Vice President, shall organize official Graduate Student Association events , including socials, luncheons, barbecues, Orientation activities, seminars, and information sessions. All proposals for events shall be submitted to the Executive Board and the Senate for approval.

Section 9: The Grievances Committee shall help address graduate student grievances and direct graduate students to the proper University administrators.

Section 10: The Constitution Review Committee shall review the Graduate Student Association Constitution and Bylaws annually and propose revisions to the Senate under the direction of the Parliamentarian.

Section 11: Ad-hoc committees may be established by the President for a limited duration to investigate and make recommendations to the Executive Board and the Senate.

Section 12: The chairpersons and members of the Graduate Student Association Committees and the Executive Board shall comprise the Graduate Student Association Cabinet, which will meet upon the President's request.

Article III: Constitutional and Bylaw Amendments

Section 1: The powers to amend the Graduate Student Association Constitution and Bylaws shall rest with the Senate.

Section 2: Constitutional amendments shall address overall governing structure, duties, and missions of the Graduate Student Association. Bylaws amendments shall elaborate terms, governing structure, duties, and processes specified in the Constitution. No Graduate Student Association Officer or Senator may offer amendments that create conflict between the Bylaws and the Constitution.

Section 3: Amendments must be sponsored by the Parliamentarian, on behalf of the Constitution Review Committee, or a current Senator not under recall. The Senator must present the proposed amendment in writing to the Parliamentarian at least two (2) weeks prior to the Senate meeting at which action is taken by the Senate.

Section 4: Senators must be given a minimum of one (1) week's notice prior to meetings at which amendments are to be considered.

Section 5: Constitutional amendments shall be adopted immediately upon the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the voting members at a Senate meeting and approval of or no action by the Graduate School Dean within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the amendments. Bylaw amendments shall be adopted immediately upon the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the voting members at a Senate meeting and submitted notification to the Graduate School Dean.